



Afternoon Alert - Wednesday, April 5, 2017

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## HEADLINES

### Noon news

All networks gave top play to reports on North Korea's ballistic missile launch this morning, saying that the missile is believed to have flown for about 60 km before landing in the Sea of Japan. NHK said the missile is believed to have been a new type of mid-range ballistic missile known as KN-15. The networks quoted Prime Minister Abe as telling reporters this morning: "North Korea went ahead and launched a ballistic missile again today. This is a grave provocation against security and a clear violation of the UNSC resolutions, and can never be tolerated. We strongly condemn it." TV Asahi said the GOJ believes that Pyongyang launched the missile to coincide with the U.S.-China summit, adding that the GOJ is hoping to closely cooperate with the U.S. and South Korea. TBS said the USG issued a rare warning against North Korea, quoting Secretary of State Tillerson as saying in a statement: "The United States has spoken enough about North Korea. We have no further comment." TV Asahi also reported on the Secretary's statement.

## INTERNATIONAL

### North Korea launches ballistic missile into Sea of Japan outside Japan's EEZ

NHK reported this morning that North Korea launched one ballistic missile toward the Sea of Japan this morning. Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga held an emergency press conference and said that North Korea fired a ballistic missile from its east coast toward the Sea of Japan at about 6:42 a.m. The missile apparently flew several dozen kilometers before landing in the Sea of Japan outside Japan's exclusive economic zone. Suga reportedly said that so far no damage has been reported. He was also quoted as saying: "The ballistic missile launch is extremely problematic from the viewpoint of ensuring the safety of airplanes and ships, and it is a clear violation of UNSC

resolutions. Japan will never tolerate North Korea's repeated provocations. We have lodged a stern protest and condemned North Korea. We will continue to collect and analyze information and immediately disclose any new information."

### **U.S. strongly alarmed by North Korea's nuclear capability**

NHK reported at noon that General John Hyten, commander of the U.S. Strategic Command, testified before a Senate hearing on Tuesday on North Korea's nuclear and missile development programs. General Hyten reportedly expressed strong alarm over North Korea's preparations to develop the technology to equip a ballistic missile with a nuclear warhead. Hyten was quoted as saying: "North Korea is conducting ballistic missile and nuclear tests at an incredible pace and it is no longer a hypothesis but an imminent threat that a North Korean missile mounted with a nuclear warhead could reach the mainland U.S." The commander also talked about a new type of mid-range ballistic missile launched by the North in February, explaining that it was a solid-fueled missile that can be launched instantly from a new mobile launchpad, which is a very problematic capability. He was quoted as saying: "North Korea, I'm not sure exactly what they're going to do tonight. I guess unpredictable is a fair statement because every time they launch, I'm not sure what that launch is going to be."

- [Japan condemns N. Korea missile, braces for further action](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Commentary: Japan's envoy stand-off with S. Korea yields only loss of face](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Abe tells Putin of sympathy, solidarity after Russia blast](#) (Kyodo News)
- [China may be concerned about closer Japan-Taiwan ties](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Survey of newspaper editorials on Japan's non-participation in nuclear arms ban talks](#) (Sankei)

## **POLITICS**

### **Anti-conspiracy bill**

NHK's "Close-up Gendai+" reported on the controversial bill to revise the Act on Punishment of Organized Crimes to criminalize acts of preparation to commit terrorism. The program said that while the government and ruling parties stress the need to establish such a law from the standpoint of taking measures against any act of terrorism, civic groups are increasingly concerned that their "freedom of conscience" will be violated. Panelists discussed the pros and cons of enacting such a law.

- [Prime minister's schedule on April 4](#) (Nikkei)
- [Analysis: Neither side able to deliver knockout as Japan school scandal drags on](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)
- [Japan Begins Work on Casino Regulations](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Anti-terrorism bill potentially subject to amendment](#) (Yomiuri)

- [Veteran politicians Kamei, Hirasawa form new group to “speak up on behalf of PM Abe”](#) (THEMIS)
- [Internal Affairs Ministry finalizes allocation of party subsidies](#) (Nikkei)
- [Editorial: Akie Abe must break silence over Moritomo Gakuen scandal](#) (The Mainichi)

## SECURITY

### [Return of U.S. military sites south of Kadena not proceeding as planned](#)

Okinawa Times wrote that although four years have passed since the U.S. and Japanese governments agreed on April 5, 2013 on a road map for the return and consolidation of six facilities and land used by the U.S. military south of Kadena AB, only 53 hectares of the 1,048 hectares of the pledged land has been returned. It remains to be seen whether the GOJ will be able to fulfill its pledge to reduce the base-hosting burden on Okinawa in a tangible manner because although the U.S. and Japanese governments are supposed to review the reversion schedule every three years, they have not yet announced their plans for review.

### [Pollutants detected in spring water near Futenma base](#)

Okinawa Times wrote that such pollutants as perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) above the permissible levels were detected in spring water sampled at six locations near MCAS Futenma through a water survey conducted by the Okinawa Prefectural Government from December 2016 through March 2017. The levels of contamination were between 1.5 to 12.5 times higher than the U.S. standards for drinking water. Japan has not established standards for such materials. An official at the prefectural government stated that although the levels of contamination were high in several locations, they will not be harmful to human health unless people drink the water.

The paper wrote that it is suspected that the contamination was generated by the Futenma base because no pollution was detected in water flowing into the base. Because PFOS is used in firefighting foam and other water repellent agents, the prefectural government asked the U.S. military to provide information about its use of PFOS and other materials and the record of accidents involving such agents after it found similar results last summer, but the prefecture has not received sufficient information.

- [Kadena Air Base takes step to avoid fighter takeoffs at night and in early morning](#) (Ryukyu Shimpo)

## SOCIETY

### [Embassy public affairs officer comments on work-life balance](#)

The Kyushu regional Nishinippon Shimbun ran an interview with Embassy Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs Margot Carrington, who recently visited Fukuoka to deliver a speech. Carrington, a mother of two children, has been conducting research on work-life balance for a number of years while working as a diplomat. She commented on Japan's efforts to implement work-style reform by saying that in order to achieve work-life balance, it is important to promote "flexible ways of working," such as flextime, and create working environments that are "friendly to everyone." Such efforts will revitalize workplaces and enrich the lives of individuals, she said. The Minister-Counselor added that it is important to improve the supervisory skills of people at managerial levels in order to maintain unity in the diversifying workplace.

Carrington, who served at the U.S. Consulate in Fukuoka from 2007 to 2010 as a principal officer, has close connections with Kyushu and Yamaguchi Prefecture. Looking back on her days in Fukuoka, she commented that she has many unforgettable memories of her time in the region and met many friendly people there.

### **[Ivanka Trump experiences Japanese culture at cherry blossom ceremony](#)**

NHK reported this afternoon that President Trump's daughter Ivanka attended with her son and daughter a cherry blossom ceremony held on Tuesday at the Japanese Ambassador's Residence in Washington, and enjoyed experiencing Japanese traditional culture. The network said Ivanka and her children visited a room where Japanese traditional toys were exhibited, and her daughter Arabella was named an honorary junior princess of the cherry blossom festival. The network said Ivanka's influence in the White House is increasing along with that of her husband, Jared Kushner, adding that attention is focused on how much influence she will exert on diplomacy.

- **[1 in 4 Japanese men remain unmarried until age 50](#)** (The Mainichi)
- **[More businesses deploying disabled workers in key positions](#)** (Kyodo News)
- **[Major TV firms unite to move toward Internet streaming](#)** (The Asahi Shimbun)

## **ECONOMY**

- **[Online service companies thrive among Japan Inc.'s midtiers](#)** (Nikkei Asian Review)

## **OPINION POLLS**

- **[Highlights of the March 2017 Jiji Press Public Opinion Poll](#)** (Jiji Press Public Opinion Poll Bulletin)
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